

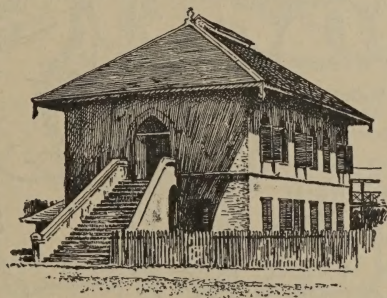
Pam-India

MINOR MISSIONS

IN

BURMA

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LYON MEMORIAL, BHAMO

BOSTON
AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARY UNION

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John F. Goucher
No.

MINOR MISSIONS IN BURMA.

ALTHOUGH the principal efforts of Baptist missions in Burma have been exerted among the Burmans and the Karens, missionary operations have been gradually enlarged so as to reach nearly all the numerous races in that country, which are said to number as many as forty-seven. Separate missions are maintained among all of the principal races which are important enough to be mentioned by name in the census report of 1891, with the exception of the Chinese. The numerous minor divisions of the people of Burma are allied to one or another of these principal races among whom missions are maintained, and so are in some degree reached by the gospel of Christ.

THE SHAN MISSION.

The Shans are in number the third race in Burma. In the census of 1891, the whole population of the province is given as 8,057,558, of whom 6,129,182 were Burmans and Talaings, and 663,657 were Karens. The Shans numbered 582,655, of whom 94,302 were in Lower Burma, 112,492 in Upper Burma, and 375,961 in the tributary Shan states. They are the Burman branch of that great race, perhaps the most numerous in southeastern Asia, called by the general name of Tai, and speak dialects of the same language wherever found, so that persons who have learned the Shan language in Burma can easily travel and converse with the people in Siam, in the Yunnan province of China, or among the Khamtis of Assam. In Burma the Shans are the travelling traders of the country, and every year large numbers come down from the Shan states bringing herds of ponies and large quantities of the products of Shanland for sale. They have no independent government of their own, but are divided into principalities governed by chiefs called *sawbwas*, and they are again subject to the authority of the lands where they live, whether in Burma,

Siam, or China. They are an active, intelligent, and enterprising people, occupying many positions of trust and responsibility in Burma, and the British government continues to govern the Shan states through their *sawbwas*, to whom much independent action is allowed. In religion the Shans are Buddhists, and those in Burma are excessively bigoted and hard to evangelize, but it is stated that Buddhism has a less firm hold upon the Shans in the territory where they are most numerous.



SHAN MISSION HOUSE, TOUNGOO.

The Shans had attracted some attention from earlier missionaries, but the first to be appointed to labor specially among them was Rev. Moses H. Bixby, who, with his wife, left America in December, 1860, and settled in Toungoo, where there were a large number of Shans who had recently been driven out of their own territory by the civil war raging in Upper Burma. Toungoo remained the principal centre of the Shan mission for thirty years. From there Dr. Bixby

made many journeys into the Shan country, and did much to attract attention to that people, but on account of the unsettled state of the country he was not able to open mission work in Shanland itself. A small church of Shans and Burmans was formed in Toungoo and schools established for the people. The most important single addition which the Shan mission ever received reached Burma in March, 1867, consisting of Rev. J. N. Cushing and Mrs. Cushing and Miss A. R. Gage. Miss Gage gave herself to the study of the Burman language, as this was more important for work in the schools, but Mr. and Mrs. Cushing applied themselves to the study of the language of the Shan people. They had no books to help them, but they made such progress that after a time they were able to converse with the people, and immediately began the preparation of tracts and other literature in the Shan language. Mr. Cushing, with Rev. A. T. Rose, visited the western part of Shanland in 1867, and he has made many extended and hazardous journeys throughout the length and breadth of the Shan states, including those under the control of Siam, becoming thoroughly acquainted with the country and with the people. The knowledge gained in these journeys has been of immense assistance to the British Government and in the development of the Shan mission, which has now found its true and principal home in the Shan country itself. In 1869 Mrs. Cushing accompanied her husband on an extended and perilous tour through the Shan country, as far as the Mekong River, which has now become the boundary between the French and British territory. They travelled over ten mountain ranges, some of which rise to a height of more than six thousand feet above the sea. On this journey they were seized, not by the Shans but by Burman soldiers; their books were burned and they were sent out of the country with threats. Having spent a short time in Rangoon in 1869, in November, 1870, they made their home at Toungoo and strengthened the little church which had been gathered there. In 1871 the Gospel of Matthew and a grammar of the Shan language, the first Christian books to appear in that tongue, were published.

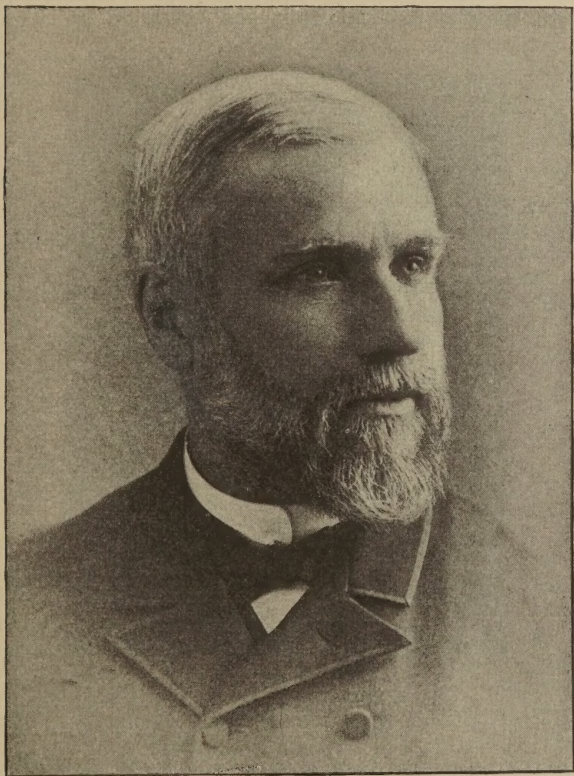
The progress of the Shan mission in Burma has been marked by a singular fatality among the promising and able workers

who have been sent out. Rev. J. B. Kelley arrived in Burma in 1872, and was drowned Jan. 1, 1873, while on a journey in Shanland with Mr. Cushing. In 1879 Rev. B. J. Mix and wife joined the mission, but both were soon obliged to leave the country by the failure of their health. Miss Mary A. Rockwood, of Massachusetts, reached Toungoo in 1880 and showed the most promising qualifications and abilities for an able and successful missionary, but after less than two years of labor passed away from an attack of typhoid fever, a disease at that time almost unknown in Burma. Rev. A. J. Lyon arrived in Rangoon with his wife in December, 1877, but died within three months. The loss of able leaders greatly retarded the progress of the mission, but those who remained in the work continued to labor with great faithfulness. Mr. and Mrs. Cushing being compelled to return to America in 1874, again reached the field in October, 1876, and proceeding up the Irrawaddy River eight hundred miles opened a station for a Shan mission at Bhamo. They were delayed three weeks at Mandalay before an order could be obtained from the king of Burma, permitting their residence in Bhamo. As the little mission in Toungoo demanded attention and care, Mrs. Cushing went to take charge of the work there in 1877, while Mr. Cushing continued to labor at Bhamo. By these divided labors husband and wife preserved alive the bereaved mission to the Shans, and Mr. Cushing was able to introduce to the work at Bhamo Rev. W. H. Roberts, and also Rev. J. A. Freiday, the latter, however, returning to America after a few years of labor.

The work of preparing religious literature in the Shan language pressed more and more upon Dr. and Mrs. Cushing, and in January, 1880, they removed to Rangoon in order to be near the printing press. The failure of Mrs. Cushing's health, however, soon compelled her to return to America. In 1881 Dr. Cushing saw the first Shan and English Dictionary through the press, and the first edition of the Shan New Testament was published in the following year. In January, 1885, the translation of the Old Testament into the Shan language was completed, and the whole Bible was printed in 1891.

Previous to this time a movement had begun toward which all labor for the Shan people had been directed. After the deposition of King Thibau by the English in December, 1885,

and the capture of Upper Burma, Shanland itself became open to the residence of missionaries. A station was open at Thibaw,



REV. JOSIAH N. CUSHING, D. D.

in the northern Shan states. in 1890, and at Moné in 1892, Rev. M. B. Kirkpatrick, M. D., being the principal agent in

the first advance, introduced to his field by Dr. Cushing, whose intimate knowledge of the country has been of great assistance to the later missionaries. The work at Moné, opened in 1892, is now under the charge of A. H. Henderson, M. D. In both stations medical work has occupied an important



SHAN GIRL.

place. Dr. Cushing having seen his great literary works completed in the publication of the Shan Dictionary and in the translation and printing of the whole Bible in the Shan language, was called upon in 1893 to assume the care of the Baptist College in Rangoon which is for the benefit of all races in Burma.

The Shan Mission in Bhamo has always been conducted in

connection with work for the Burmans, but both have been outstripped by the Kachin Mission which has shown such vitality and promise in that part of Upper Burma as to attract the chief attention of the missionaries. In 1893, however, a new station was opened by Rev. W. W. Cochrane, at Namkham, in the centre of a large Shan population. This place is just across the river from the Chinese border, situated in a fertile and beautiful valley, and, apparently, is a most promising opening for direct and aggressive work among the Shans. W. C. Griggs, M. D., first at Moné, and later at Bhamo, has made his medical work an efficient ally of the direct evangelistic mission. Since the removal of the chief centres of the work to the Shan country, the Shan Mission in Toungoo has been consolidated with the Burman, and the 1895 statistics of the Mission, so far as it is separate from others, were: 12 missionaries, 9 native preachers, 2 churches with 33 members. There are, however, many Shans in Burman churches in Toungoo, Thaton, and other places.

THE CHIN MISSION.

By the 1891 census of India, 95,571 Chins were reported, of whom 67,667 were in Lower Burma and 27,904 in Upper Burma. It is probable, however, that the enumeration in Upper Burma is very imperfect and that the number is largely in excess of that given in the census. The Chins are found on both sides of the western Yoma range of mountains, which stretches from Arakan to the Naga hills of Assam. Those to the south are more easily reached and more civilized, and are divided into four tribes using different dialects. The Chins of the north are wilder, fiercer, and less known. The language has been reduced to writing. It is a peculiarity of this people that in the Chin settlements near the Burman towns the women are tattooed on their faces, but farther in the interior, where they are in no danger of capture by the ruling race, this practice is omitted and they are of fine appearance. The Chins are allied to the Karens and are nominally Buddhists, but have not abandoned their ancient superstitions which are similar to those of the Karens. They believe in a Spirit, the

Creator and the Supreme Ruler of the universe, but they say that he is so good no one need fear anything from him, and they worship evil spirits to which they sacrifice fowls and swine.

The first convert from the Chins was baptized by Dr. Francis Mason, at Tavoy, Feb. 1, 1837. On removing from Tavoy to Henzada, Mrs. C. B. Thomas found Chins in the jungle near Henzada in 1854, and in that same year a number of Chins were baptized at Prome by Eugenio Kincaid. The first Chin assistant to be employed in the mission was at Prome, in 1863, and Rev. E. O. Stevens, for many years missionary to the Burmans at Prome, took much interest in the Chins, and baptized eight at the Henzada Karen Association in 1882. The Chin language was reduced to writing in 1865, by a Karen from Bassein, and forty were baptized by him. In 1880 Mrs. Thomas had two Chins in her school at Henzada, and becoming deeply interested in the people, she travelled in the Chin country, reaching as far as Sandoway, in Arakan, in 1882. Rev. W. F. Thomas went to Burma in 1880, joining his mother at Henzada, and became deeply interested in the Chin people. Feeling called to work among them rather than the Karens, in 1884 he travelled extensively through the Chin country on both sides of the Yoma mountains, and baptized twenty-nine Chins at Gyatedau in Arakan, at which place the first Chin Association was formed.

The most promising work among the Chins thus far was in southern Arakan. Mr. Thomas having visited Sandoway several times in journeys from Henzada, removed to that place and opened a station in 1888. Thus Sandoway, famous in Baptist missions in Burma in the early days of the Karen Mission the headquarters of which were afterwards removed to Bassein, came again into the line of mission stations in Burma. The work among the Chins from the first was very prosperous, and there were 163 Chin Christians in 1889, and 111 were baptized in 1890.

Rev. A. E. Carson, appointed to labor among the Chins, made a tour in the Chin country east of the Yoma Mountains, accompanied by Rev. W. F. Thomas, and opened a station at Thayetmyo in 1887. From this point he made many extensive journeys into the Chin country to the northwest, up the

valley of the Chindwin River. The Chins are very numerous all through this territory, which offers a most favorable field for the further extension of the missionary work.

In March, 1892, Mr. Thomas was transferred from Sandoway to the charge of the Burman Biblical Institute in Rangoon, which has now become the Burman Department of the Theological Seminary at Insein. He was succeeded in the Chin work at Sandoway by Rev. Ernest Grigg, who made extensive journeys in the Chin country, especially to the north, and opened up much territory for missionary work which had been closed since the early days of the mission in Arakan. In 1895, the Mission reported at Sandoway and Thayetmyo, 8 missionaries, 25 native preachers, 17 churches, 547 members, and 16 schools with 235 pupils. The future development of the Chin Mission must evidently be to the northward, along both the eastern and western sides of the Yoma Mountains, and will be greatly aided by the railway which the British government proposes to build up the Chindwin Valley, through the Chin country and Manipur to Assam. The prospects for aggressive work in this direction among the Chins are among the most favorable which are offered for advance mission work in Burma.

THE KACHIN MISSION.

The Kachins being a wild hill people are not separately enumerated in the census of Burma for 1891, but are estimated to number several millions. They are found on the hills of northeastern Burma, extending over into China and Assam and north to Tibet, in the southeastern part of which they are said to be numerous. One tribe of this people call themselves the Chingpau, and are the same as the Singphos of the southeastern hills of Assam. Another of the principal tribes is known as the Kowrie tribe, and is numerous in the vicinity of Bhamo. They are gradually crowding southward into Burma, and, as they go, displace the Shans and other people. They are related in race to the Karens, having some of the same songs, customs, and traditions, but the language, though similar, has so many dialectic differences that there can be no communication between the Karens and the Kachins without learn-

ing the language anew. The Kachins are a wild and savage people. Robbery and murder are among their principal occupations, yet they practise in a rude way some of the arts of civilization. Their religion is very similar to that of the Karens, and, like the Karens, also, they have a tradition of a former revelation, which was lost. Now they worship evil spirits, to which they sacrifice fowls, cattle, dogs, and swine.



KACHINS.

The first opening of missionary work among the Kachins was by Rev. J. N. Cushing, who in 1877 visited the mountains east of Bhamo, and placed several Karen teachers from Bassein in the Kachin mountain villages. Mr. Cushing had arrived at Bhamo, Dec. 22, 1876, with a view to the extension of the Shan mission, but he also did much for the beginning of the Kachin work, an interesting feature of which has been the fact that during all the years since 1877 there have been from two

to five Karen foreign missionaries laboring among this people, wholly supported by the Karens in Bassein. Dr. Cushing introduced to the Kachin work Rev. W. H. Roberts, who arrived at Bhamo in January, 1879, and then returned to lower Burma to resume his own work for the Shans. The Kachin Dictionary or Vocabulary, begun by Dr. Cushing, was completed by Mr. Roberts, who continued to be the leader in the mission among the Kachins.

From the first the missionaries were well received and great interest was shown in the gospel by the Kachins. We are frequently reminded of the readiness of the Karens to receive the gospel, by the disposition shown by the wild and savage Kachins. Several were baptized each year, and the first Kachin church was formed in 1882 in the mountain village of Poombwa, where Rev. Speh had labored for five years. Eight were baptized in another village the same year and a Kachin spelling-book was prepared in 1883.

The year 1884 was a dark time for the mission. Wild Kachins and Chinese freebooters captured Mogaung and threatened Bhamo during all the summer of that year, and finally captured the city in December. All Europeans, including the missionaries, were obliged to flee to Lower Burma. But in less than a year Mandalay, the capital of Upper Burma, had been captured by the British, King Thibaw sent into exile, and all Upper Burma was open to the safe prosecution of the missionary work. Bhamo was reoccupied, and at the close of 1885 the mission numbered four Kachin preachers and twenty-three church members. Rev. Ola Hanson, sent out for the special purpose of reducing the Kachin language to writing, reached Bhamo in 1890. Twenty-three Kachins were baptized in 1891, and in 1892 such progress had been made in the language that twelve Kachins could read and write in their own language, the first among this numerous people to acquire that accomplishment. The Gospel of St. John had been translated, and also a catechism and hymn-book, which were printed by Mr. Hanson at his own cost.

In 1894 Rev. George J. Geis joined the mission, and after residing at Bhamo for a time, opened a new station at Myit-kyina. In the same year the work of reducing the Kachin

language to writing was practically completed, and a system of printing the Kachin in Roman letters which had been prepared by the missionaries, was accepted by the government of India, another illustration of the aid which missions afford to civilization. The translations which had already been made were revised in the Roman characters and were placed in the



A STREET IN BHAMO.

hands of the printers. In 1895 there were five missionaries laboring among the Kachins, with several Karen missionaries from Bassein, four native preachers, one church at Bhamo, with one hundred and twelve members, and a thriving school with seventy-three pupils. For the use of the mission a good chapel was built at Bhamo, and called the "Lyon Memorial," in memory of Rev. Albert J. Lyon, whose early and lamented death was such a blow to the mission work at Bhamo.

OTHER RACES.

Among the smaller of the numerous races into which the people of Burma are divided, one of the most interesting is the Taungthus. They are supposed to be earlier inhabitants of Lower Burma than either the Burmans or Talaings, and are most nearly related to the Pwo Karens in language and character. They are widely scattered over Burma and the Shan states, and in Lower Burma number 35,220, settled principally around their old city of Thaton. The census gives 5,895 in Upper Burma. The Taungthus are a simple, timid people and Buddhists in religion. They have a written language and are gradually becoming assimilated to the Burmans, the latest census showing a slight decrease in ten years in Lower Burma.

The first Taungthu convert was baptized by Dr. Judson about 1835, but no missionary has ever devoted his attention wholly to this people. A number of converts have been gathered especially in connection with the Burman work in Thaton, where Mrs. J. B. Kelley labored among them, but no Christian literature had ever been printed in their language until 1895, when Rev. Edward O. Stevens of Moulmein caused Mrs. Judson's Catechism to be translated into Taungthu and printed as a tract. In the autumn of 1895 a Burman preacher, U Aung-Bwe, baptized several Taungthus in the Moulmein district near the Siamese frontier and hoped to be able to form a church. No separate church organization had previously been formed among them, although the Taungthu Christians are more numerous at Thaton than any other place.

The Talaings were formerly the ruling race of Lower Burma. They are sometimes known as Peguans, and from them the former province of Pegu was named. Their kingdom at one time embraced a large part of Lower Burma. Their language is entirely distinct, but the Talaings are gradually becoming assimilated to the Burmans in language and dress, so much so that they are identified with the Burmans in the census of 1891. The only Talaings who now are known by that name are found in the vicinity of Moulmein and are supposed to number about 80,000. Considerable missionary work has

been done among this people in various districts by the missionaries to the Burmans, and Rev. Edward A. Stevens, D. D., prepared a vocabulary of the Talaing language, which, however, was not printed until 1895 when it was completed and carried through the press by his son, Rev. Edward O. Stevens of Moulmein. Perhaps more missionary work has been done among the Talaings by Moug Reuben of the Moulmein district than by any other one. He has a good knowledge of the language and has preached much among them and baptized many who are now in the Burman churches of Moulmein and Amherst.

There are more than half a million natives of India proper in Burma, chiefly Telugus and Tamils, and among these much missionary work is being done, especially at Rangoon where there is a prosperous and self-supporting Telugu and Tamil church. Also in Mandalay, Moulmein, Toungoo, and other places attention has been devoted to these people by missionaries who were sent to labor among the Burmans or Karens. The Telugus and Tamils are the laboring and among the most enterprising people of the country. They are getting into their hands some of the activities of the principal cities of Burma, and they will well repay a larger amount of attention from Christian people. In 1894, Rev. W. F. Armstrong and his wife were appointed as special missionaries to this people, to labor as best they might among the large number scattered throughout the various cities of Burma. Mr. Armstrong was formerly a missionary to the Telugus in India under the Canadian Baptist Board, but entered English work at Moulmein in 1884, and having already command of the Telugu language, has become much interested in the people and is able to accomplish much good. But the field and opportunity among this enterprising people are vastly too large for the labors of any one missionary.

All the numerous smaller races of Burma, like the Paloungs, the Padoungs, the Brechs and others are reached, in some degree, by the labors of missionaries to the Shans and Karens. Among the Brechs, who very much resemble the Karens in their general characteristics, an exceedingly interesting work has sprung up under the care of Rev. Alonzo Bunker, D. D., of Toungoo. The Paloungs are a most interesting people, occupying the high land west of Namkham in Upper Burma,

and will be reached by the Shan missionaries from that station. They are said to have some resemblance to both the Shans and the Karens.

Aside from all the work which the Baptist missionaries in Burma carry on among the natives, English services are maintained in a number of the larger cities. There is an English Baptist church in Rangoon which is independent and self-

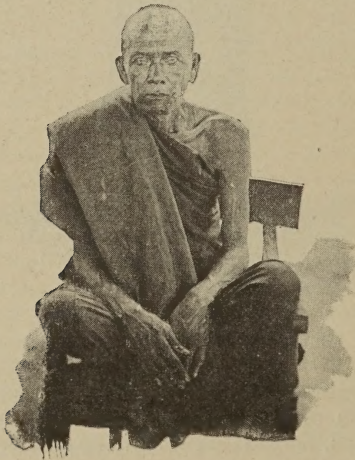


PALOUNG WOMAN.

supporting, and also a church in Moulmein of which Rev. F. D. Crawley, son of Rev. Arthur Crawley, formerly missionary to the Burmans, became pastor in 1895. Services are also maintained at Mandalay among a large and increasing English-speaking population in that city, and English preaching is held in other cities.

From the days of Judson, Burma has always been recognized as peculiarly mission ground of American Baptists. No other

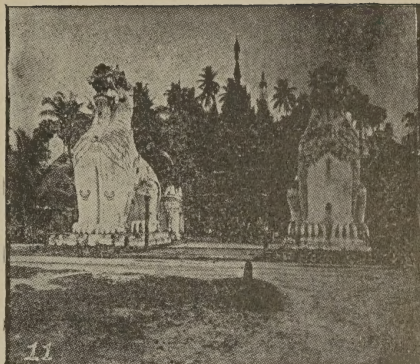
bodies have undertaken Christian work in the country except the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, representing the High Church element in the Church of England, and the American Methodists, who have a few missionaries in Rangoon and Mandalay. So efficiently have the Baptists cultivated this, their earliest mission field, that Burma is more abundantly supplied with missionaries in proportion to population than any other heathen land. The effort that American Baptists have thrown into their work in this peculiarly interesting country has been largely blessed, and the missions in Burma are recognized as among the "Miracles of Missions." There yet remains in Burma vast regions unevangelized, and the needs of the field as well as the prosperity already achieved bring heavy responsibilities upon the Baptists of America to whom this field in the providence of God has been so specially given.



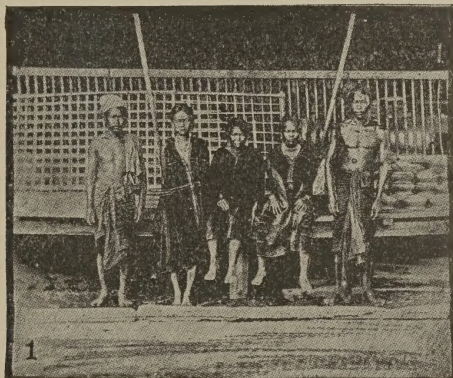
BURMAN BUDDHIST PRIEST.



BURMAN BUFFALO.



IMAGES BEFORE A PAGODA.



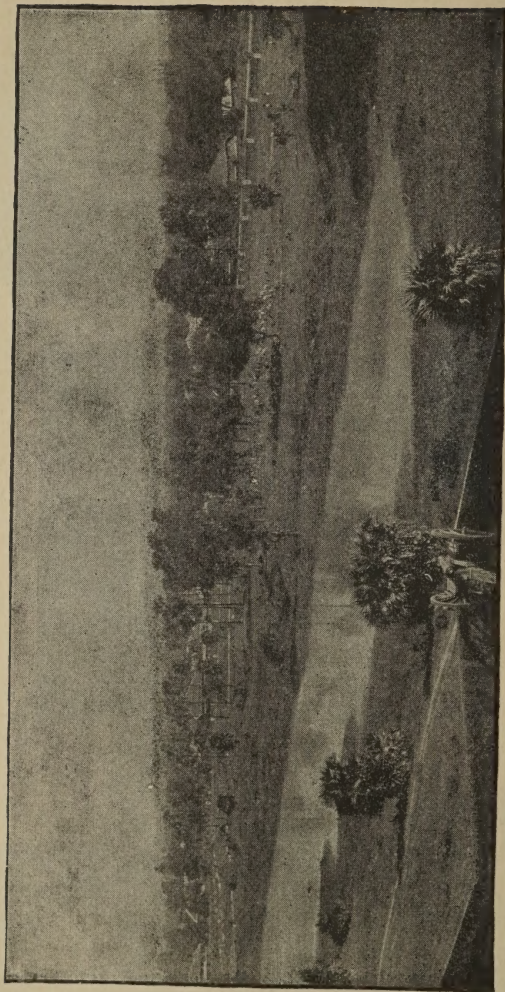
HILL PEOPLE OF BURMA.



A BABY ELEPHANT.



ELEPHANTS PILING LUMBER.



VIEW FROM THE FORT, TOUNGOO, BURMA.